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EXHIBITION OF THE AMERICAN WATER-COLOR SOCIETY

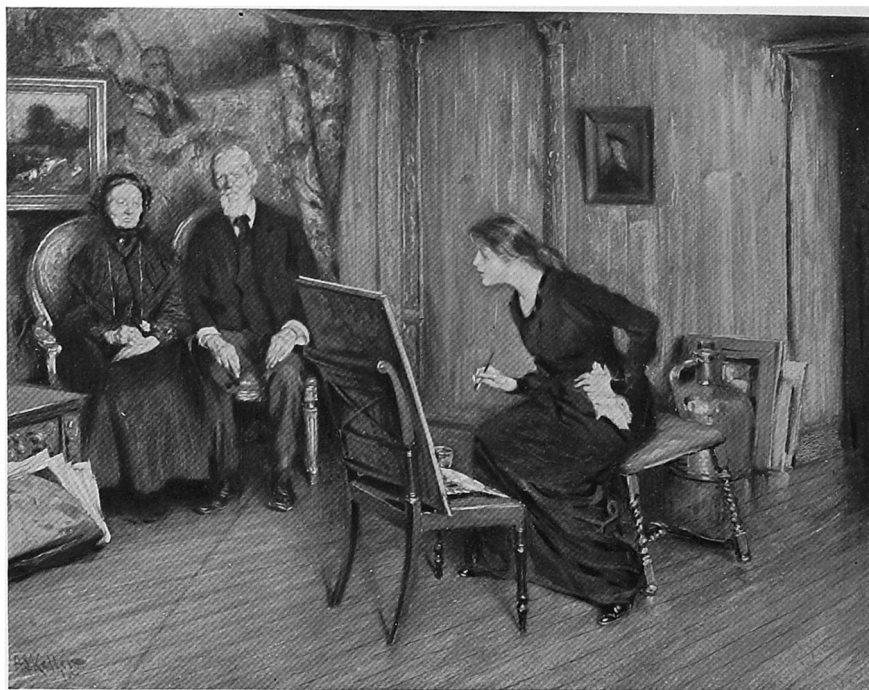
The thirty-fifth exhibition of the American Water-Color Society, lately closed in New York, bore unstinted witness to two fads which one would gladly see the artists relegate to the limbo of undesirable experiments before the occurrence of their next annual event. One of these was an excessive partiality to low-toned color schemes, which, among certain workers in water-colors, has developed into something akin to a cult; and the other was a use of the medium for which the society stands pledged by its very name to be a representative in such a way as to suggest oils.

The one tended to rob the exhibition of much of its accustomed brilliance and sparkle, and the other to confuse, if not to destroy, the very nature of water-color painting, and to suggest hazardous—and to lovers of this form of art expression unpleasant—ventures on questionable grounds. This gloom of depressing tones and this lack of loyalty to the true spirit of water-colors could not fail to impress visitors to the American Art Association galleries, in which the display was made.

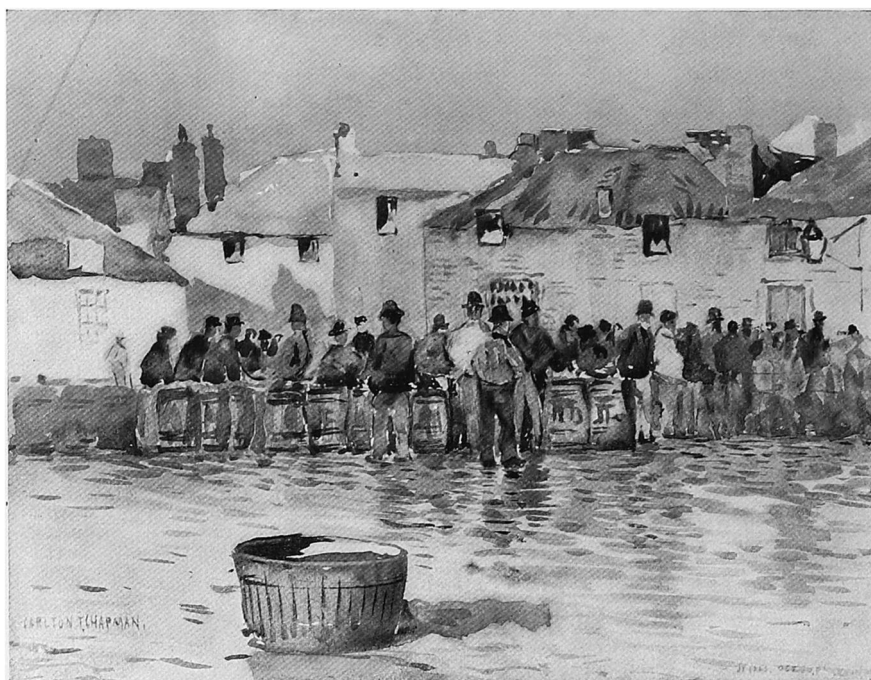
Among the four hundred and seventy-nine pictures shown, there were, of course, very many most beautiful and admirable specimens of work in water-color, and there were not wanting numerous reminders of the joyous life of former exhibitions. These bright spots and these examples of natural treatment served as a welcome foil for the aggregate of the less pleasing pictures.

Two hundred and twenty-two artists were represented, and among them were many whose names are not to be found in previous catalogues of the society. The list of the new-comers, however, disclosed no marked genius, and while much of the work of these comparatively unknown petitioners for public favor was full of promise, the older members of the society easily carried off the palm in point both of theme and treatment.

Apropos of the two characteristics of the exhibition just mentioned, one may say of this as of every other American display of paintings what G. A. Storey said of the recently opened Royal Academy exhibition in London: "The dissolving view is getting fainter, and new forms are appearing through it. In art we cannot go back, we cannot retrace our steps, revivals are impossible. There may be a Renaissance, a recurring wave may wash to shore what seemed lost treasures, but they come moulded and fashioned into different form. Art, though old as the hills, must be ever new, ever growing and



THE FINISHING TOUCHES. By Arthur J. Keller



SELLING THE CATCH. By Carlton T. Chapman

sending out fresh branches, for it is a living thing; and when it seems to die it is only resting for a while, to rise in even greater force and beauty."

The low-keyed tones which have been in vogue for some seasons with the New York Water-Color Society, and which are now appearing in the work of the older organization, are thus probably to be taken only as an evidence of the flux of popular taste and of the ambition of the artists themselves to supply novelty in the way of unusual effects. All this will doubtless be corrected at no future day by a recurrence of the bright legitimate treatment which to many if not most critics seems inherent in the very nature of water-colors. The treatment of water-colors so as to give the effect of oils, moreover, must be regarded as an excrescence on legitimate work which a saner policy will soon abolish.

There is an easy explanation if not an excuse for these fads of treatment, since one cannot shut one's eyes to the fact that the people who patronize art exhibitions have for some years been impelled not less by curiosity as to the nature of the shows than by love of art productions. Acres of canvas and paper are annually hung on gallery walls for the inspection of a comparatively limited public. The devotees of art have their *ennui*. It is not surprising if a plethora of oft-recurring themes and treatments should pall, and it is no less surprising if the artists should rise to the occasion, like chefs in a hostelry, and furnish new æsthetic pabulum, and seek to please a jaded palate with odd assortments of ingredients and unheard-of spices and other trimmings. When all is said and done, however, one ventures the hope that the next exhibition of the society will show a greater preponderance of the brighter and higher-keyed work of former years.

Among the old contributors to the exhibition who seem to have escaped the mania for flat or neutral tones was Childe Hassam, whose pictures commanded attention by their brightness and naturalness. His work, as evidenced by four or five examples, was water-color in the fullest and truest sense. His "Beach at Broadstairs" was one of the most finely and brilliantly executed pictures in the galleries. Hassam's work is strictly individual, but it has the individuality that is characterized by sanity. He sees things brightly, and be it on canvas or water-color paper, he seeks to record his impressions as he receives them. In his way he is a daring experimentalist, but it must be said of all his efforts that he does not run to gloom or oddity for the sake of mere effect.

The same may be said of a number of other contributors to the society's display. George F. Of, Jr., for instance, showed a charming sunset, original in conception and even daring in its rendering of gorgeous colors. His picture was as pleasing as it was effective. Albert L. Groll was loyal to his medium, and his "A November Evening" and "A Gray Day" were among the choice works in the

exhibition. Two of Alexander Schilling's pictures were also characterized by the same sterling qualities, being eminently personal and



PUPPIES
By J. G. Brown

at the same time true to nature. His "Fields and Sky, Afternoon," was an exceptionally careful composition, conveying the impression



THE TWILIGHT'S THOUGHTFUL HOUR. By Henry Farrer



A NEW ENGLAND HARBOR. By F. K. M. Rehn

of great spontaneity. It was simply a horizontal line of fields arched by a vaulted sky and marked by sweeping cloud masses and vertical trees. But it had the charm of being a natural scene truly interpreted. So, too, with his "Passing Storm," in which a green meadow, just freshened by a rainfall, was rendered doubly attractive by a fleeting rainbow.

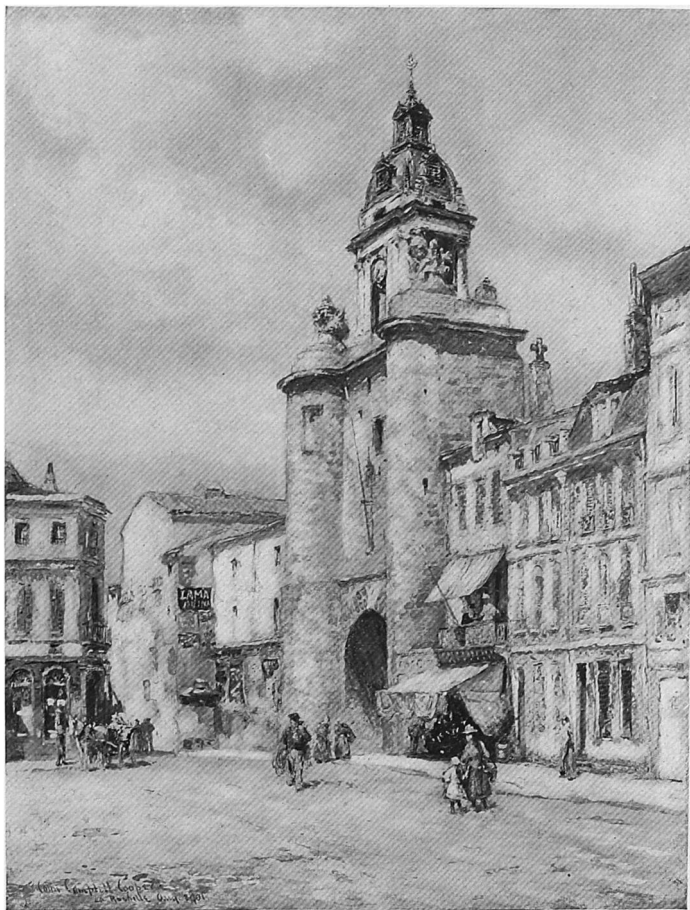
Charles P. Gruppe's three Holland scenes were as good as anything in the line of water-color that he has lately contributed to exhibitions. They were Dutch in sentiment, Dutch in conception, Dutch in treatment, but they were true to their medium, effective in point of technique, and pleasing in theme. Edward Potthast's "Sail by Moonlight" and "In the Gloaming" were also fine specimens of water-color. The luminous sky and the able suggestion of motion of the former made it a marked picture; the latter was less pleasing, but was no less characterized by judicious treatment.

No grudging meed of praise, too, may be accorded to the work of Edmund H. Garrett, which was marked by fine breadth of treatment; to two



ROSES
By Harriet Sartain

scenes of old New York and a sympathetic bit, "Winter Moonrise," by Everett L. Warner; to seven landscapes depicting woodcutters, all clever arrangements of grays, greens, and browns, by

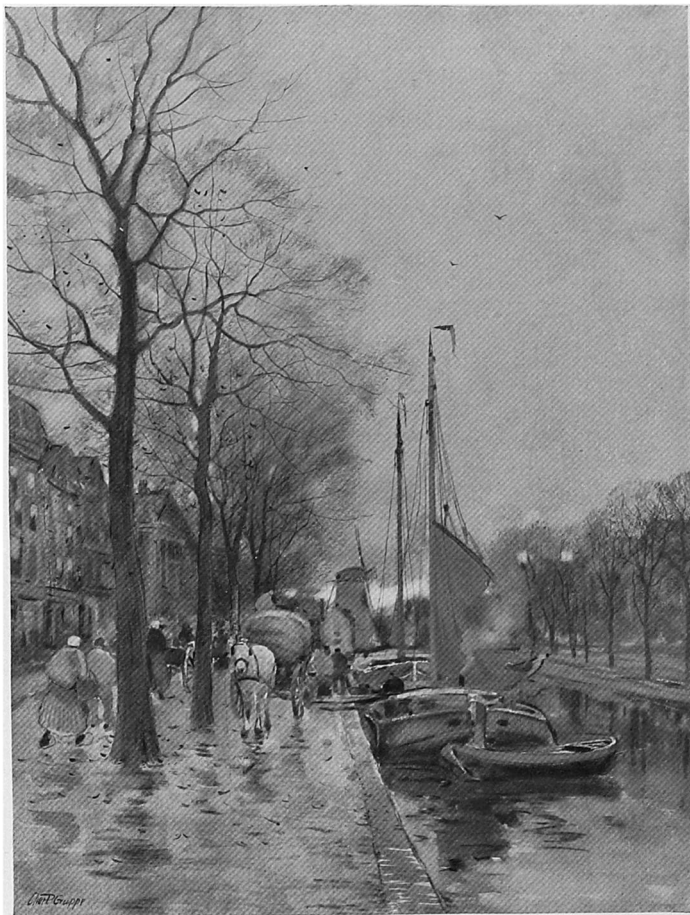


CLOCK TOWER, LA ROCHELLE, FRANCE

By Colin C. Cooper

Frank Russell Green; to nine pictures by Charles Warren Eaton, of varied theme and interest; to E. Irving Couse's "At the Spring," showing sheep coming to drink; to A. I. Josephi's "Coming Storm," which was replete with sentiment; to the contributions of F. Hopkin-

son Smith, especially "The Morning Hour—Piazzatta," which was one of this artist's most pleasing Venetian scenes, disclosing a clever use of architectural background; and to Carlton T. Chapman's char-



CANAL AT THE HAGUE
By C. P. Gruppe

acteristic pictures, of which "Selling the Catch" was especially worthy of mention. Several of these works are given herewith.

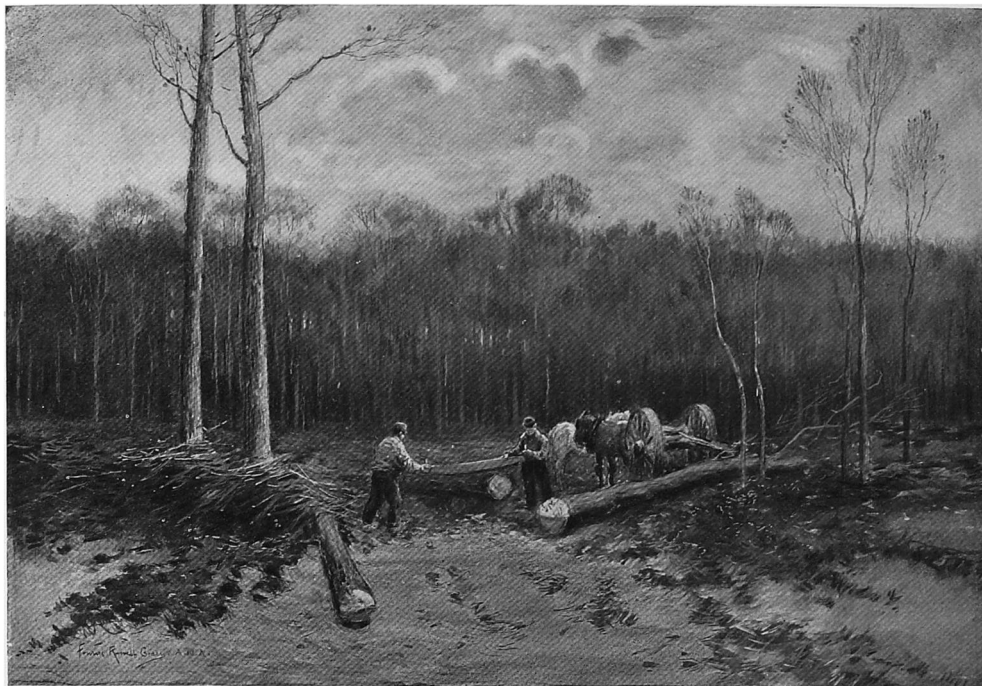
Arthur I. Keller's "The Finishing Touches," which won for him the William T. Evans prize of three hundred dollars, was an espe-

cially clever bit of realism, which by common assent well merited the honor accorded it, being rich in illustrative qualities, which doubtless emanated from Mr. Keller's principal occupation. The picture showed the interior of a studio in which an auburn-haired girl artist was just putting the finishing touches to the portraits of an old couple who gave manifest evidence of resignation to the onerous task of sitting. The interior was finely worked up, the character and condition of the sitters were well expressed, and the earnest intent of the pretty artist was admirably incorporated in both pose of body and expression of face. This is the fifteenth time that the Evans prize has been awarded, and it may be of passing interest to the reader to know that Mr. Keller is the fourteenth man who has won it, the prize having been awarded to only one woman since its establishment.

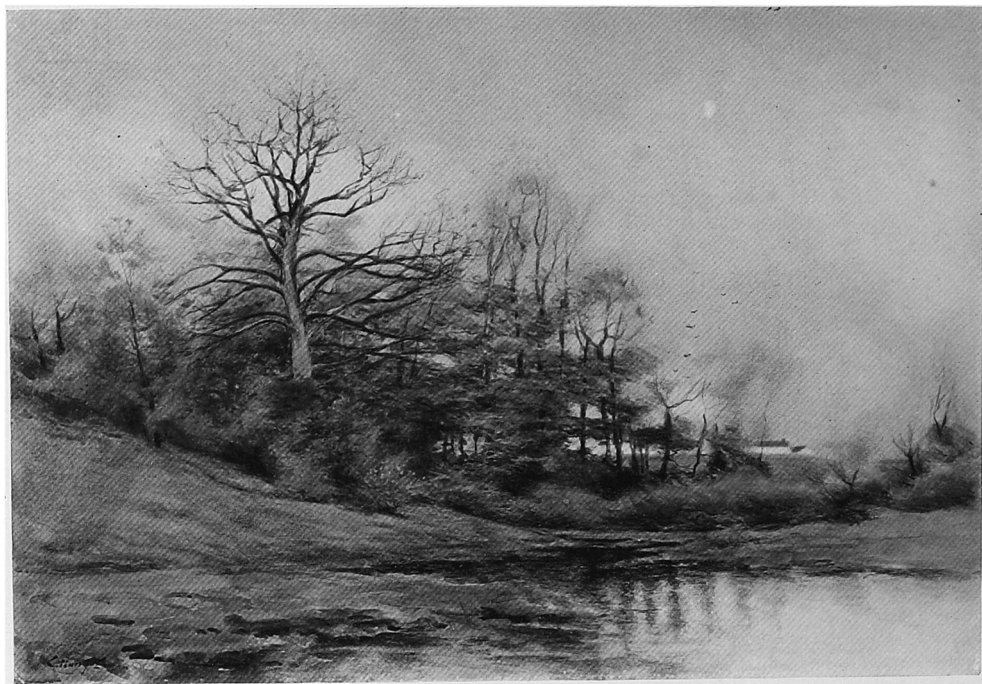
Referring again to the reprehensible use of body-color as though it were oil, thus giving a dull, lack-luster, opaque effect foreign alike to both media, one may mention a picture or two that stood out conspicuously among the offending works. Ross Turner's "Phantom Ship" was unquestionably a strong picture. It had a well-suggested movement of sky and water; the big galleon in the foreground, and the phantom ship dimly shadowed in the hollow of massive clouds, were well conceived and well executed. The picture was one to arrest if not to hold the spectator's attention. And yet the forcing of the medium beyond its legitimate limits made the work neither the one thing nor the other. It was a hybrid between water-color and oil, lacking the brilliancy of the one and conviction of the other.

Henry B. Snell, in his "The Cove," was another offender in the same way. He was only half successful in adjusting by his use of material the white water of the pool and the green verdure of the hill beside it. The impression conveyed was that of an unfortunate trick, that of making water-colors masquerade as oils. Indeed, some of the pictures exhibited, as if still further to confuse or obliterate the accepted medium of the society, had actually been varnished after the manner of oil-paintings, a practice that could find no excuse or justification beyond the ill-advised whim of a willful innovator.

Among the new-comers, James H. Gardner-Soper had two pictures that merited more than a passing notice, "October Evening, The Music Lovers," and "The Japanese Legend of Urashima and the Sea-God's Daughter." The former was a clever bit of realism, showing marked individuality of character in the different figures, and the latter a fanciful conceit, depicting the water princess as a fish with a woman's face, in the act of diving. The works shown bespoke unusual promise for the artist. The same encouraging word may be said of C. H. Pepper, who showed some exceptionally interesting figures; of C. C. Mase, who had on exhibition two good bits of realism in "A Shipyard in Winter" and "A Bit of Chinatown"; of Miss Harriet Deen, who contributed some good flower pieces; and of



EDGE OF THE FOREST. By Frank Russell Green



THE POND. By C. Harry Eaton

E. Mars, who seems to have gleaned inspiration from Boutet de Monvel, and whose "A Caller," a picture depicting a little girl in cap



JESSIE

By James Symington

and muff half lost in a big chair, was one of the pleasing pictures of the exhibition. Several other pictures by new artists were pleasing.

One missed few of the accustomed exhibitors, each of whom adhered closely to his usual line of work. Thomas Moran showed

four of his incomparable views of Colorado, Utah, and Arizona; J. G. Brown, more of his street urchins and puppies; W. T. Richards, a picture which he has never excelled, in "Moonrise," showing a bit of shore-land quite remarkable in conception and treatment; George G. Maynard, another "Water-Witch," even more sensuous and pleasing than his former effort; Henry Farrar, seven bits of landscape, that showed his devotion to Corot; Austin Needham, two noteworthy works in "Moon of Autumn" and "A Nocturne"; James Henry Mosler, eight pictures, varied in theme and all of excellent quality.

Other artists, whose work merited extended notice did space allow, were Mrs. Rhoda Holmes Nichols, Merritt Post, Miss Althea Platt, R. M. Shurtleff, James Symington, A. T. Bricher, Frederick Dielman, H. Bolton Jones, George H. McCord, T. W. Wood, George H. Smillie, Alfred Fredericks, Miss Fidelia Bridges, C. C. Griswold, Arthur Parton, Walter Satterlee, Walter L. Palmer, F. K. M. Rehn, E. Wood Perry, W. H. Drake, Miss Alice Woods, Harry R. Poore, Everett L. Warner, Harry Fenn, Anna C. Murphy, S. P. R. Triscott, M. Petersen, G. E. Burr, J. E. Bright, Charles C. Curran, and M. F. Ochtman.

As might be expected in a collection of upward of five hundred water-colors, there were, together with the meritorious works, the usual number of trifling themes cleverly treated and ambitious themes bunglingly executed. On the whole, however, the average standard of the works shown was fully as high as in former exhibitions. Many, perhaps, would not regard the predominance of low-keyed pictures as militating against the interest of the show—this is necessarily a matter of taste—for in point of fact many of the finest water-colors shown in the galleries were of this character. The writer simply confesses a partiality for the brighter works formerly in vogue. He is willing to let the cult of the low-toned artist thrive until fashion calls a halt, and in the mean time is frank to acknowledge the merit of much that does not suit his fancy. For the deliberate treatment of water-colors as though they were oils, however, nothing can be said in justification, and the sooner the members of the society recognize this fact and use their accepted medium legitimately, the better for their exhibitions.

C. HOWARD DUDLEY.



A QUARTETTE OF FIGURE STUDIES

The following four figure studies from life will be interesting to the reader, not merely from their grace and beauty, but as specimens of the work being done by the students in American art schools. They are reproduced here by courtesy of the Art Institute of Chicago, in whose class-rooms the original drawings and paintings were executed, and of whose instruction they are an exemplification.